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SOVIET PRESS SPURS DOSAAF RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN,
FEBRUARY - APRIL 1953

On 22 February 1953, Pravda published a lengthy article calling for an increase in Dosaaf membership in connection with the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Soviet Armed Forces. The Pravda article touched off a Dosaaf recruiting campaign in the regular press with the majority of central and republic papers carrying major articles on Dosaaf during the period February - April (Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 27 Feb; Trud, 1 Mar; Sovetskaya Belorussiya, 5 Mar; Kommunist /Armenia/, 14 Mar; Izvestiya, 24 Mar; Pravda Ukrainy, 24 Mar; Zarya Vostoka, 27 Mar; Sovetskaya Latvija, 29 Mar; Bakinskiy Rabochiy, 31 Mar; Sovetskaya Moldaviya, 9 Apr; Sovetskaya Litva, 15 Apr; Sovetskaya Estoniya, 16 Apr).

Indications are that the campaign was also taken up by newspapers on the city, oblast, and probably lower levels, since similar articles appeared in Leningradskaya Pravda on 1 March, in Moskovskiy Komsomolets on 31 March, and in the Baranovichskaya Oblast, Belorussian SSR, newspaper Krasnyy Zvezda (a reference to the latter article appeared in Sovetskaya Belorussiya of 5 March). No important articles on Dosaaf appeared in newspapers of the Karelo-Finnish SSR or the Central Asiatic republics during this period. However, in the case of the latter, several issues of each paper were not received in FDD during February, March, and April.

The general tenor of the articles on Dosaaf was highly critical. Dosaaf was attacked for its failure to increase membership sufficiently and to draw members into taking an active part in the society's work. Instances were cited of primary organizations which exist merely on paper, of widespread failure to pay dues, and of cases where many so-called members do not even hold membership cards. Rural areas were frequently mentioned as being particularly weak in increasing Dosaaf membership and activity.

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Blame for these shortcomings was attributed to several factors. The Pravda article of 22 February criticized party, government, and other public organization officials for "failure to understand properly the significance of Dosaaf's activity and for imagining that increasing the Soviet citizen's military knowledge is of secondary importance or is even unnecessary because of the USSR's policy of peace."

This criticism was repeated in the various articles which followed in republic and central newspapers. These articles frequently mentioned shortages of instructors, equipment, and operating bases as sources of weakness. Lack of cooperation with Dosaaf by Komsomol and other public organizations was also cited as an important factor in hindering the society's development. In connection with this, some figures on Komsomol membership in Dosaaf were given. For example, in the Moldavia and Latvian SSRs less than 25 percent of all Komsomol members have joined Dosaaf; in the Georgian SSR, 45 percent have joined.

Statistical information taken from these articles and also from several articles in the Dosaaf press which appeared during the same period is given below, by republics. Only eight republics are represented because information on Dosaaf in the others was either unavailable or too general to be of interest.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.

Belorussian SSR

During 1952, Dosaaf ranks in the republic grew by half a million.(1) Another article reports that membership doubled in this period. In many kolkhozes and other institutions all workers are Dosaaf members. Last year, more than 7,000 members took part in boating cruises.(1) However, about half of the new members have not received membership cards or paid their dues, and in general tens of thousands of members have no cards or have paid no dues.(2)

During the past year and a half, Dosaaf membership in Baranovichskaya Oblast doubled.(3)

Georgian SSR

Although hundreds of new Dosaaf primary organizations have been created in the republic, Dosaaf activities are unsatisfactory, largely because of the lack of Komsomol cooperation with the society. Only about 45 percent of the Komsomol members in Georgia belong to Dosaaf and in certain rayons this percentage is lower: in Lagodekhskiy Rayon, of more than 4,000 Komsomol members only 1,412 are Dosaaf members; in Signakhskiy Rayon, of 3,000 Komsomol members 1,300 belong to Dosaaf.(4)

Karelo-Finnish SSR

During the past year the number of Dosaaf members in the republic has increased by 13 percent. Dosaaf work is poor in the numerous forestry enterprises of the republic, and Dosaaf primary organizations have been created at only 20 logging points.(5)

Latvian SSR

Although the Riga city Dosaaf organization has recently grown by many thousands of members, Dosaaf organizations in most of the rural regions of the republic are inactive and in many kolkhozes there are no Dosaaf primary organizations.

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Less than a fourth of the republic's Komsomol members belong to Dosaaf, but despite this the republic Komsomol Central Committee is not taking active measures to ensure that every Komsomol member join the society.(6)

Lithuanian SSR

Komsomol organizations in the republic are paying very little attention to Dosaaf work; in Klaypedskaya Oblast, (7) for example, only 18 percent of the Komsomols are Dosaaf members.

Moldavian SSR

During the past year more than 33,000 new members joined Dosaaf. More than 30,000 members took part in cross-country marches. However, primary organizations of the society are for the most part small in membership and weakly organized. Many Dosaaf members are not enrolled in study circles and are not taking an active part in the society's program. Last year, Dosaaf membership failed to increase in 13 rayons and decreased in 13 other rayons. In 127 kolkhozes, and in many enterprises, schools, MTS, etc., there are still no Dosaaf primary organizations. In Sorskiy, Dubossarskiy, Kriulyanskiy, and several other rayons, the number of primary organizations has decreased. During the last year in Glodyanskiy Rayon alone, 18 primary organizations ceased activity.

The majority of Komsomol organizations take little interest in strengthening Dosaaf primary organizations; less than one fourth of all Komsomol members in the republic belong to Dosaaf.(8)

RSFSR

Dosaaf membership in Tambovskaya, Molotovskaya, and Arkhangel'skaya oblasts has shown little increase during the past year. Dosaaf work in Primorskiy Kray and Yaroslavl'skaya Oblast is on a particularly low level.(9)

In Yaroslavl'skaya Oblast during the past year Dosaaf membership increased by only 15 percent. In Bryanskaya, Kalininskaya, Kurskaya, and Vladimirskaia oblasts the majority of kolkhozes do not have Dosaaf organizations and existing organizations have few members. In Leningradskaya and Tambovskaya oblasts Dosaaf membership grew by only 7.6 percent and in Kirovskaya Oblast membership decreased.(10)

In Kurskaya Oblast Dosaaf membership grew by only 18 percent during the past year, while in 16 rayons of the oblast the number of Dosaaf members decreased. More than half the kolkhozes of the oblast have no primary organization.(11)

In Krasnoyarskiy Kray there are no primary organizations in the majority of kolkhozes.(12)

Ukrainian SSR

The activity of many Dosaaf primary organizations increased during the past year, but the Ukraine is lagging behind such republics as Georgia and Uzbekistan in increasing its Dosaaf membership.(13) At present, 95 percent of Ukrainian kolkhozes have Dosaaf primary organizations. However, in Poltavskaya, Vinnitskaya, Zhitomirskaya, Chernigovskaya, and L'vovskaya oblasts, work in creating new primary organizations in the villages is extremely weak. The republic has paid special attention to bringing the rural population into Dosaaf. In this respect Kamenets-Podol'skaya Oblast has been the most successful; during the past year the number of Dosaaf members in the oblast increased by 60 percent.

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In Khar'kovskaya Oblast 10 percent of all adults are Dosaaf members. In Khar'kov itself this figure is higher, and in certain rayons -- Stalinskiy Rayon, for example -- almost all adults are members. In Khar'kovskaya and Voroshilov-gradskaya oblasts there are Dosaaf primary organizations in all enterprises, institutions, and schools. Stalinskaya, Zaporozhskaya, Odesskaya, Zaparkatskaya, and a few other oblasts have come close to achieving this also.

Close cooperation has not yet been established with other public organizations, particularly the Komsomols. In all, 40 percent of the Komsomols in the Ukraine are Dosaaf members.(2)

SOURCES

1. Minsk, Sovetskaya Belorussiya, 1 Mar 53
2. Moscow, Patriot Rodiny, 25 Mar 53
3. Sovetskaya Belorussiya, 5 Mar 53
4. Tbilisi, Zarya Vostoka, 27 Mar 53
5. Patriot Rodiny, 1 Apr 53
6. Riga, Sovetskaya Latvija, 29 Mar 53
7. Vil'nyus, Sovetskaya Litva, 15 Apr 53
8. Kishinev, Sovetskaya Moldaviya, 9 Apr 53
9. Patriot Rodiny, 25 Feb 53
10. Ibid., 15 Mar 53
11. Ibid., 22 Mar 53
12. Moscow, Voennoye Znaniye, No 4, Apr 53
13. Kiev, Pravda Ukrainy, 24 Mar 53

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